



**Director of
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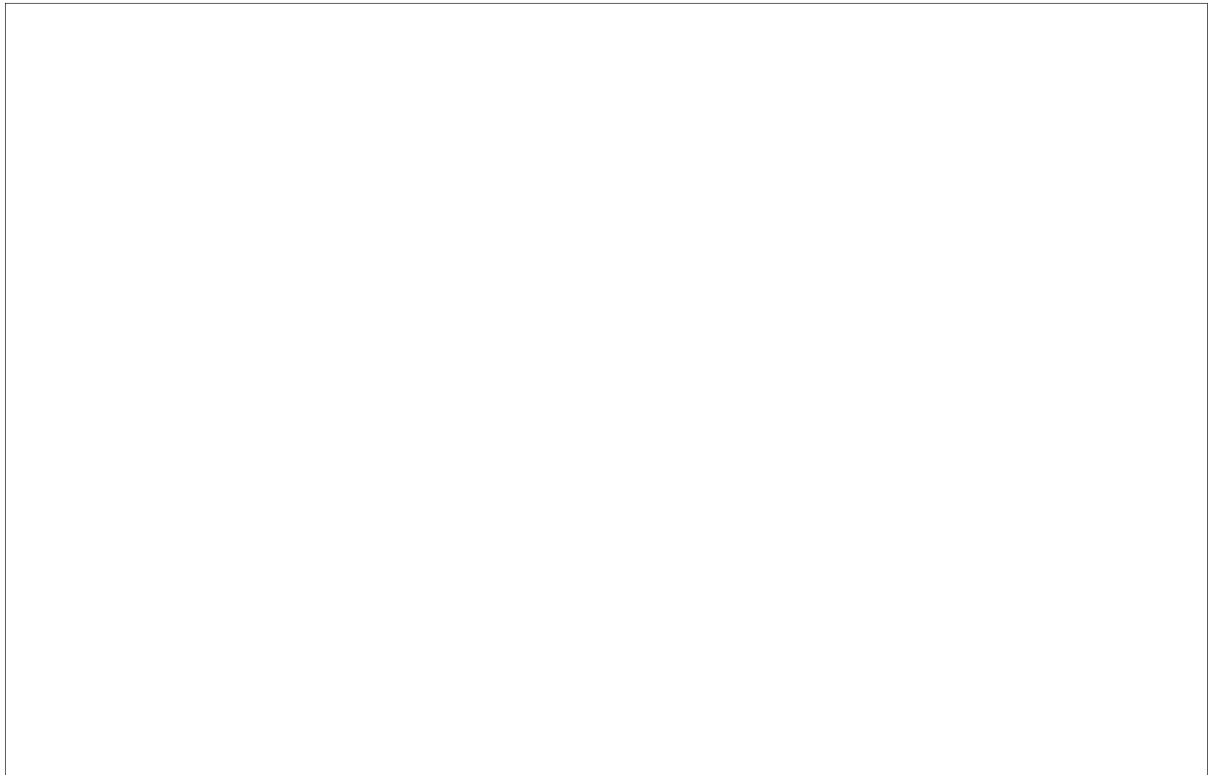
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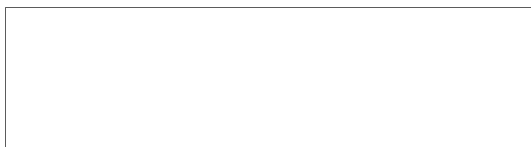
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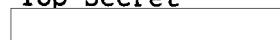
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SPECIAL ANALYSIS

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IRAN-SYRIA-LIBYA: Association of Radicals

The association among Iran, Syria, and Libya that began with the overthrow of the Shah and gained momentum with the outbreak of the war between Iran and Iraq is showing signs of new strength. This is causing moderate Arabs to worry increasingly that the group will work to undermine them. The anti-Western policies of the radicals fit well with Moscow's efforts to expand Soviet influence in the region at US expense.

Relations among the three states probably will improve further, but it is unlikely that they will enter into a formal relationship like the one concluded last year by Libya, South Yemen, and Ethiopia. Syria, despite its approaches to Tehran, probably is the weak link.

Damascus is wary of alliances that are not relevant to the Arab-Israeli dispute.

Libya, too, may be wary of establishing a formal link with Iran that would increase Tripoli's isolation from the other Arabs. Even if a tripartite agreement were achieved, Arab alliances have never been durable, and the inclusion of non-Arab Iran would not improve the prospects for this one. Assad considers Libyan

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leader Qadhafi unreliable [redacted]

Qadhafi is unable to resist meddling. Last year he angered Tehran by supporting an independent Kurdistan that would include part of Iran. [redacted]

Potential for Troublemaking

Even a loose alignment among the three states is likely to cause problems for moderate Arab and US interests. If the efforts by Syria and Iran to topple Iraqi President Saddam Hussein succeed, Iran would be in a better position to dominate the Persian Gulf. Assad, however, would try to prevent the installation of a fundamentalist Islamic regime in Baghdad. [redacted]

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Libya and Syria will continue to support the radical Palestinian splinter groups that contribute to the chaotic situation in Lebanon because the radicals' efforts often advance the interests of Tripoli and Damascus. [redacted]

Soviet Attitudes

Moscow would welcome any arrangement between Libya and Syria--two of its principal clients--that could be used to develop new openings to Tehran. [redacted]

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